



THE Connection

A CONTINUOUS COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITIES

*As we start a new year, I would like to take a moment to say **THANK YOU** to our many customers and update you on a few company happenings.*

GBT's Fiber Network continues to grow, with homes and businesses getting blazing fast Internet connections that only fiber can deliver! Many rural areas lack fiber because it isn't financially viable for big Internet companies to provide service due to lack of population density. The GBT Cooperative has invested over \$40 million in the last 13 years to bring 94% of our members a ROBUST Fiber Connection! 2021's focus included the rural areas of Brownell, Bazine, and McCracken—meaning these areas, along with current fiber-connected members, will have access to Gigabit Internet connections and the best experience available in the area! The GBT Cooperative has three more exchanges—Bison, Burdett, and Garfield—planned to receive fiber connections in 2022. I am sure many of you unwrapped an Internet-connected device this holiday season that depends on a robust Internet connection to deliver the desired performance. The GBT Cooperative understands the broadband needs of our members are evolving--upgrading to 100% Fiber Optic Network throughout our area has been part of our long-term commitment and strategy that should wrap up in the next three years!

Getting expert, local IT help is easy with GBT Business Technology Solutions. GBT has increased its offering of [Business IT Solutions](#) recently because of demand from our customers. As technology evolves and society becomes more dependent on the Internet for commerce, attacks have become increasingly more common. Often hackers target small business because of the lack of security infrastructure to protect against these threats. Whether a business is large or small, when IT issues arise, productivity can come to a standstill. Our team is close, accessible, and ready to help keep your business running. Call us, and we will customize a package to meet your individual needs!

In addition to deploying more Fiber Infrastructure and ramping up our Cybersecurity offerings, GBT converted all video customers to [StreamIT TV](#). Customers are enjoying a feature-rich platform, including FREE DVR, full HD, instant rewind & replay, with no clunky set-top boxes, that integrates well with other streaming platforms, such as Netflix and ESPN+.

"It is easy to think of us as just an Internet provider. However, our GBT Team takes a lot of pride in ensuring the communities we serve can meet their economic needs, trade their commodities, grow academically, entertain, and participate in commerce."

Continued-

As I wrap this up, I want to take a moment to recognize all the people that make our services work and keep our technology moving forward. It is easy to take for granted the work they do to keep our members connected. In a perfect world, the services we provide should largely be invisible. If you peel back the layers, you will quickly realize the thousands of miles of fiber, the complex hardware, fiscal oversight, and expertise that CONNECT YOU to the world! It is easy to think of us as just an Internet provider.

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However, our GBT Team takes a lot of pride in ensuring the communities we serve can meet their economic needs, trade their commodities, grow academically, entertain, and participate in commerce.

\$40M

The GBT cooperative has invested to bring Fiber Internet to our customers.

94%

GBT cooperative members who have a robust Fiber Internet connection.

Our Cooperative has seven core values that guide the direction for what each of us strive to deliver to our membership. The one that really makes us unique is our commitment to our communities—Team GBT is actively involved in local happenings to help support them physically and economically. Part of the ongoing commitment of this value is to continue to learn from our members so we can deliver on what is important to you.

GBT, with the leadership of our Board of Trustees, our dedicated Team of Employees, and our loyal Members, will be around to deliver communication needs to the membership well into the future. From all of us at GBT, Happy New Year!

Beau Rebel / **GBT General Manager**



GET TO KNOW YOUR GBT NEIGHBOR

Employee Spotlight: Michele



Tell us what your job mainly consists of?

I am in the accounting department and my main three jobs are payroll, billing, and capital credits. I enjoy payroll and capital credits because it's fun to give checks out to people!

Capital credits are your area of expertise, tell us a little bit more about them.

My first project at GBT was to balance capital credits. I enjoy doing the general payout capital credits in November because everyone is looking forward to it. The tough part about capital credits, and what saddens me, is when one of our amazing, loyal customers passes away. Customer's allocations are usually on their phone bills. If they ever have any questions about capital credits, they can always call me!

What is one of your favorite things about GBT as a company?

Ever since I started, GBT has been all about



"Ever since I started, GBT has been about family and community first."

family and community first. If we didn't have the community, we wouldn't be here. I enjoy keeping books for the churches at Timken and McCracken and the cemetery at McCracken. I appreciate that community involvement is one of GBT's core values.

Tell us a fun memory you'll never forget.

I'll never forget in 2007 when we took two buses full of GBT customers and employees to the KU vs. KSU football game. It was great to interact with our customer and KU won! That was a LOT of fun!

\$100,000 in FRS Scholarships and Free Trip to Washington DC!

GBT is excited to once again sponsor the Foundation for Rural Service Scholarship Program and Youth Tour to Washington, DC!

FRS Scholarship

For High School Seniors | Deadline: February 25, 2022!

Apply now for a \$2,500 General Scholarship to students from rural America to an accredited college, university, or vocational-technical school which GBT co-funds with the Foundation for Rural Services. This program seeks to encourage students to return to their rural communities upon completing their education. If your parents or legal guardians receive at least one GBT residential or business service than make sure you apply, as GBT has had several students receive this in the past. In addition, a \$5,000 James L. Bass Legal Scholarship is available for students entering their first year of law school. Go to www.gbta.net/scholarships for the link to apply!

FRS Youth Tour

For High School Students | Deadline: March 1, 2022!

Do you have or know a high school student who is 16 or 17 and whose parents have at least one GBT service? If so, tell them to apply for the FRS Youth Tour which brings together 100 high school students to Washington DC for 5 days to learn about legislative and government processes and the importance of quality broadband connections. This is an all expenses paid trip which will take place from June 1-5, 2022. Deadline to Apply: March 1, 2022! Apply at www.gbta.net/scholarships.





Family TV time just got even better.

With features like **50 hours of DVR, HDTV, instant rewind and replay, and no clunky set-top boxes**, your whole family will love GBT's StreamIT TV!



Get **2 FREE Firesticks** when you sign up for StreamIT today!



GBT Hunting:

GBT Hunting friends - we love playing the GBT hunting game with you each month! It's so fun to see your guesses roll in and give a \$10 credit to one of you! You've already noticed that our newsletter looks a little different than before, and with this new look comes a new kind of hunting! Going forward, we're going to switch up the GBT hunting game - so stay tuned! For this month all you'll have to do is answer the question below. The answer to the question can be found somewhere in the newsletter! As always, submit your answer to gbthunting@gbta.net to be entered into January's \$10 bill credit giveaway! If you have any questions, please reach out!

- The GBT Connection Team

January's Hunting Question:
As of the end of year 2021, what percentage of GBT cooperative members have a robust Fiber Internet connection?

December Winner: Greg Hinman of Lewis.
There were a total of 23 remotes in the December issue.

January Recipe:



Crème Brûlée

Recipe by: Addie Flax; GBT Marketing

My mom's favorite dessert has always been crème brûlée. You don't find it too often on menus here out in western Kansas, so years ago I attempted to make it at home for her birthday. To me, crème brûlée seemed intimidating at first, but once you make it, you'll find it's super simple and fun to make for special occasions or, hey, even a random Tuesday night!

Ingredients

- 2 cups heavy cream, or half-and-half
- 1 vanilla bean or 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 5 egg yolks
- 1/2 cup sugar, more for topping

Directions

Step 1: Heat oven to 325 degrees. In a saucepan, combine cream, vanilla bean and salt and cook over low heat just until hot. Let sit for a few minutes, then discard vanilla bean. (If using vanilla extract, add it now.) **Step 2:** In a bowl, beat yolks and sugar together until light. Stir about a quarter of the cream into this mixture, then pour sugar-egg mixture into cream and stir. **Step 3:** Pour into four 6-ounce ramekins and place ramekins in a baking dish; fill dish with boiling water halfway up the sides of the dishes. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes, or until centers are barely set. Cool completely. Refrigerate for several hours and up to a couple of days. **Step 4:** When ready to serve, top each custard with about a teaspoon of sugar in a thin layer. Place ramekins in a broiler 2 to 3 inches from heat source. Turn on broiler. Cook until sugar melts and browns, about 5 minutes. Serve within two hours.



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